

Date of Posting: 07/01/2011

Posting Round Date:



Date of Removal: 08/02/2011

Removal Round Date:



FINAL DETERMINATION TO CLOSE  
THE LAKE CREEK, TX POST OFFICE  
AND ESTABLISH  
SERVICE BY RURAL ROUTE SERVICE

DOCKET NUMBER 1369563 - 75450

## I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service has determined to close the Lake Creek, TX Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the Cooper Post Office, located eight miles away.

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster retired on January 02, 2009. An employee from a neighboring office may have been installed as the temporary officer-in-charge (OIC). Postmaster level and office service hours are determined by a workload analysis which includes the number of deliveries and revenue.

The office was studied for closing or consolidation due to the following reasons: Office does not earn 2 hours

The Lake Creek Post Office, an EAS-11 level, provided service from 08:00 to 15:45 Monday - Friday, 08:00 to 09:00 on Saturday and lobby hours of 24 on Monday - Friday and 24 on Saturday to 28 Post Office box customers and no delivery customers. Retail services included the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as Registered Mail, Certified Mail, Insured Mail, COD Mail, and Express Mail services; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail.

The retail window averaged 16 transaction(s) accounting for 17 minute(s) of retail workload daily. With minimal workload, the Postal Service feels that effective and regular service will be provided by rural route service. Office receipts for the last 3 years were: \$29,206 (76 revenue units) in FY 2008; \$20,857 (54 revenue units) in FY 2009; and \$26,505 (68 revenue units) in FY 2010. There were no permit mailer(s) or postage meter customer(s).

On February 23, 2011, representatives from the Postal Service were available at Lake Creek Methodist Church located at 569 FM 198 E to answer questions and provide information to customers. 19 customer(s) attended the meeting.

On January 26, 2011, 144 questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Lake Creek Post Office. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at the Lake Creek Post Office. 63 questionnaires were returned. 4 responses were favorable, 30 unfavorable, and 19 expressed no opinion regarding the proposed alternate service.

One congressional inquiry was received on April 25, 2011.

When this final determination is implemented, delivery and retail services will be provided by the Cooper Post Office, an EAS-18 level office. Window service hours at the Cooper Post Office are from 08:00 18:00, Monday through Friday, and Closed on Saturday. There are 62 post office boxes available.

The following concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, on the petition, and on the congressional inquiry:

1. **Concern:**

Customer expressed a concern about irregular hours that the rural route serves the community

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about irregular hours that the rural route serves the community. Our carriers strive to provide service at approximately the same time on a daily basis, however mail volumes and weather conditions often effect delivery times. If you desire special services from the rural carrier you may leave a note in your mailbox instructing the carrier to sound his horn, and then meet the carrier to receive services. Retail services may also be obtained at the administrative post office located \_\_\_\_\_ miles away.

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3. **Concern:**

Customer expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox

**Response:**

The customer also expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox. A questionnaire was sent to the postal inspection service concerning mail theft and vandalism in the suspended Post Office area. Their records indicate that there has not been any report of mail theft or vandalism in the area. However, customers may place a note in their mailboxes instructing the carrier to sound their horn when they arrive, in order to transact financial business.

4. **Concern:**

Customer expressed a concern about package delivery and pickup

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about package delivery and pickup. Rural carriers will deliver packages that fit in your rural mail box. If the package does not fit in the mail box, the carrier will deliver the package up to 1/2 mile off of the line of travel, at a designated place, such as on your porch or under a carport.

5. **Concern:**

Customer expressed a concern about the inability of the rural carrier to weigh and rate letters and packages

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about the inability of the rural carrier to weigh and rate letters and packages. The rural carrier will accept any letters or packages for mailing. The carrier will estimate the cost and provide a receipt for any money received. On the following delivery day the carrier will provide change or a bill for the amount over the estimate.

6. **Concern:**

Customers expressed concern about having to erect a rural mailbox

**Response:**

The customer expressed concern about having to erect a rural mailbox. Customers are not required to erect rural mailboxes. Customers may receive PO Box service from the administrative Post Office located \_\_\_\_\_ miles away.

7. **Concern:**

Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about the loss of the Communities' identity. A community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. The Postal Service is helping to preserve community identity by continuing the use of the suspended Post Office name and ZIP Code in addresses and in the National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory.

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9. **Concern:**

Customers expressed concern for those customers with disabilities who are not able to go to administrative Post Office to pick up their mail

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about those customers with disabilities who are not able to go to the post office to pick up their mail. Customers are not required to travel to another post office to receive mail or obtain retail services. These services will be provided by the carrier to a roadside mailbox located close to customers' residences. In hardship cases, delivery can be made to the home of a customer. Changes in the type of delivery are considered where service by existing methods would impose an extreme physical hardship for an individual customer. Any request for a change in delivery method must be submitted in writing to the administrative postmaster.

10. **Concern:**

Customers expressed concern over the apparent lack of interest by the Postal Service for the needs of the community

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern that the Postal Service exhibits a lack of interest in the mailing needs of the community. The Postal Service is required to provide each community with regular and effective service, using the most cost efficient means possible. The proposed alternate delivery service will meet the mailing and service needs of the community in a more cost effective manner.

11. **Concern:**

Customers expressed concern over the dependability of rural route service

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern over the dependability of rural route service. Rural letter carriers perform a vital function in the United States Postal Service serving thousands of families and businesses in rural and suburban areas while traveling millions of miles daily. Rural letter carriers are highly respected by the American public. This respect has been earned by many years of dedication to the Postal Service and to postal customers. During national and local emergencies, including prolonged periods of extreme weather conditions, rural carriers have demonstrated great responsibility in providing mail service to postal customers. Rural carriers are required to serve the route expeditiously and arrive at boxes at about the same time each day.

**12. Concern:**

Customers inquired about mailbox installation and maintenance

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about mailbox installation and maintenance. Customers are responsible for mailbox installation and maintenance. Mailboxes must be placed so that they may be safely and conveniently served by the carrier and must be located on the right-hand side of the road in the direction of the carrier's travel. Mailbox supports should conform to state laws and highway regulations. The Postal Service recommends that customers contact the administrative postmaster or carrier for advice on placement of mailboxes and mailbox height and supports.

**13. Concern:**

Customers said they would miss the special attention and assistance provided by the personnel at the

**Response:**

**14. Concern:**

Customers were concerned about loss of employment in the community

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about the loss of employment in the community. The postmaster position is vacant and there is no guarantee that any replacement postmaster would be from the community.

**15. Concern:**

Customers were concerned about mail security

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about the security of mail. Customers may place a lock on their mailboxes. The mailbox must have a slot large enough to accommodate the customer's normal daily mail volume. The Postal Service does not open mailboxes which are locked and does not accept keys for this purpose.

**16. Concern:**

Customers were concerned about senior citizens

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about senior citizens. Carrier service is beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to customers do not have to make a special trip to the post office for service. Special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs. To request an exception for hardship delivery, customers may contact the administrative postmaster for more information.

**17. Concern:**

You were concerned about having to travel to another post office for service

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about having to travel to another post office for service. Services provided at the post office will be available from the carrier, and customers will not have to travel to another post office for service. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience.

**18. Concern:**

85% of this community consist of the elderly. Some can not drive to the Cooper Post Office. What will be done for them?

**Response:**

The rural carrier can provide service to these customers.

**19. Concern:**

Can the rural carrier deliver the mail to the Post Office Boxes?

**Response:**

No, because we would still have to maintain the building.

20. **Concern:** Can't the US Government help the USPS? Such as a bailout?
- Response:** We have asked for assistance. There has been no response to our requests.
21. **Concern:** Customers asked why their post office was being discontinued while others were retained
- Response:** The customer asked why the suspended post office was being discontinued while others were retained. Post offices are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. When there is a vacancy in a small office, it is customary to conduct a study of the business activity and investigate the feasibility of providing service by alternate means.
22. **Concern:** Customers concerned about the additional work load for the carrier?
- Response:** If the workload increases a route adjustment will be completed on the route to adjust the workload to another route.
23. **Concern:** Customers expressed a concern for the loss of retail services.
- Response:** The customer Rural Carrier can provide any of the services that the retail units provide.
24. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern about misdelivered mail
- Response:** The customer expressed a concern about misdelivered mail. The concern about misdelivery has been brought to the attention of the administrative postmaster. The Postal Service regrets any inconvenience that customers have experienced because of misdelivery. We consider misdelivered mail a very serious problem and appreciate when customers report this to us since it provides an opportunity to take corrective action.
25. **Concern:** Customers have poor Internet service.
- Response:** We gave the customers the 1-800 number to contact the Postal Service.
26. **Concern:** Customers questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance
- Response:** The customer questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance. Carrier service is more cost-effective than maintaining a postal facility and postmaster position. The Postal Service estimates an positive annual savings.
27. **Concern:** Customers questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance. Concern was also expressed that too much money was spent in the larger cities
- Response:** The customer expressed a concern about the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance. Concern was also expressed that too much money was spent in the larger cities. Carrier service can be and, in this case, is more cost-effective than maintaining a postal facility and a postmaster position. The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of approximately totalsavings. Additional funds are necessary in larger cities because of a greater workload. Larger cities often realize greater revenue which can offset their greater expenses.
28. **Concern:** Customers wanted to know if they could choose who delivered their mail?
- Response:** No, rural carriers bid on routes. Postmaster will address this issue with the carrier.
29. **Concern:** Customer's wanted to know what can they do to save their Post Office.
- Response:** The customer can fill out questionnaires and attendance at the community meeting.
30. **Concern:** Customers wanted to know who owned the building and what was the amount of rent that was paid?

**Response:**

We are unable to answer that question. (FOI act)

31. **Concern:**

Customers were concerned about later delivery of mail

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about delivery time. A customer's location on a carrier's line of travel determines the time of day mail is delivered. This, of course, precludes providing early delivery of mail to every customer because, no matter how we structure a route, somebody must be last. We do, however, carefully consider the volume of mail for each route so that we can deliver the greatest amount of mail at the earliest possible hour. With the largest fleet of delivery vehicles in the world we must pay special attention to energy conservation measures, to minimize vehicle and fuel expenses. When the price of gasoline goes up one cent per gallon our total gasoline cost rises more than \$8 million. Therefore, when structuring a route, we must balance our goal to deliver as much mail as possible as early as possible with the need to minimize the travel distance a route must cover.

32. **Concern:**

Customers were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier

**Response:**

The customer were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier, retail services provided at the post office are available from the carrier. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience. Listed below are some services available from the carrier and how to obtain them.

#### **PURCHASING STAMPS BY MAIL**

The Stamps by Mail Program provides customers the opportunity to purchase stamps, envelopes, and postal cards by using Form 3227-R, Stamp Purchase Order (Rural), available from the post office or the carrier. Commemorative stamps and stamp collecting products are also available. The customer addresses the postage paid order form envelope, encloses payment by personal check or postal money order made payable to the US Postal Service, and mails the form (postage-free) or leaves it in the mailbox for the carrier to pick up. Most orders are processed overnight, and some imm

33. **Concern:**

Customers were concerned about permit mailing

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about permit mailing that was input at the suspended Post Office. Responsibility for the permit account will be/has been transferred to the administrative Post Office. Mailings must be submitted to that office for verification. Customers interested in obtaining a permit should contact the administrative postmaster.

34. **Concern:**

During the recent ice storm customers complained they did not get mail.

**Response:**

MPOO addressed, The HCR drivers refused to drive with the bad weather conditions.

35. **Concern:**

If you lower the level of the office and reduce the hours could the office stay open?

**Response:**

No, it would still cost the Post Office money to continue to maintain this office.

36. **Concern:**

Is the closing of Post Offices an President Obama Initiative?

**Response:**

No

37. **Concern:**

The customers wanted to reduce the hours of the Post Office on a trail basis.

**Response:**

This suggestion should be included in your responses on your questionnaire.

38. **Concern:**

What critia was used to select this office for closing?

**Response:**

The office is vacant and earns less then 2 hours aday of workload.



## II. EFFECT ON COMMUNITY

Lake Creek is not an incorporated community located in Delta County. The community is administered politically by Delta County. Police protection is provided by the Delta Sheriff Office. Fire protection is provided by the Cooper Fire Department. The community is comprised of retired people, farmers/ranchers, and those who commute to work at nearby communities and work in local businesses.

Businesses and organizations include: No Businesses. Residents may travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Lake Creek Post Office will be available at the Cooper Post Office. Government forms normally provided by the Post Office will also be available at the Cooper Post Office or by contacting your local government agency.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, on the petition, and on the congressional inquiry:

1. **Concern:**

Customer expressed a concern about their 911 address

**Response:**

The customer expressed a concern about your 911 address. 911 addresses are generally given by the county's 911 coordinator. The Postal Service does not establish 911 addresses. Any questions concerning your 911 address should be directed to the county's 911 coordinator.

Based on the information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Service concludes this proposal will not adversely affect the community.

### III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES

The postmaster retired on January 02, 2009. The noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) may be separated from the Postal Service. No other Postal Service employee will be adversely affected.

### IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS

The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of \$ 42,134 with a breakdown as follows:

Postmaster Salary (EAS-11, No COLA)	\$ 30,492
Fringe Benefits @ 33.5%	\$ 10,215
Annual Lease Costs	<u>+ \$ 6,300</u>
Total Annual Costs	\$ 47,007
Less Annual Cost of Replacement Service	<u>- \$ 4,873</u>
Total Annual Savings	<u>\$ 42,134</u>

### V. OTHER FACTORS

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

### VI. SUMMARY

The Postal Service has determined to close the Lake Creek, TX Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the Cooper Post Office, located eight miles away.

The postmaster retired on January 02, 2009. If the office has a noncareer PMR, they may be separated from the Postal Service. No other employee(s) will be adversely affected. Post office workload has declined. Effective and regular service will continue to be provided by rural route service.


The Lake Creek Post Office provided delivery service to no customers and 28 PO Box customers. The daily retail window transactions averaged 16. There are no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

There will no longer be a retail outlet in the community. However, delivery and retail services will be available from the carrier, alleviating the need to travel to a Post Office for service. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$42,134 annually. A disadvantage to some may be in meeting the carrier to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service has determined that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and this final determination is warranted.

### VII. NOTICES

- A. Support Materials. Copies of all materials upon which this final determination is based are available for public inspection at the Lake Creek Post Office and Cooper Post Office during normal office hours.
- B. Appeal Rights. This final determination to close the Lake Creek Post Office may be appealed by any person served by that office to the Postal Regulatory Commission at 901 New York Ave NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20268-0001. Appeals must be received by the Commission within 30 days of the date this final determination is posted. If an appeal is filed, copies of appeal documents prepared by the Postal Regulatory Commission or the parties to the appeal will be made available for public inspection at Lake Creek Post Office and Cooper Post Office during normal office hours.

  
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Dean J. Granholm  
Vice President of Delivery and Post Office Operations

06/30/2011  
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Date